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ABSTRACT

The media play an increasingly strong role in transmitting values; behaviors; social norms; attitudes; and knowledge to youth and adults. Media literacy involves the ability to ask questions about what is watched, heard, or read. It involves learning what to look for, what to ask, and how to question these many influences. Media literacy also challenges its students to create their own counter advertising messages. A general understanding of media messages is an important first step in developing a communications strategy to reduce substance abuse or prevent gun violence. This paper helps promote such an understanding. It lists national organizations, publications, and the names of community leaders who have expertise in the field of media literacy. (JDM)

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MEDIA LITERACY

Technical Assistance Packet

Join Together:
A National Resource for Communities Fighting Substance Abuse and Gun Violence

www.jointogether.org

April 2000

ED 456 359

Description of the Issue

Today's media play an increasingly strong role in transmitting values, behaviors, social norms, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge to youth and adults alike. Media literacy is the ability to ask questions about what we watch, hear, and read. It involves learning what to look for, what to ask, and how to question the many powerful media influences that fill our lives everyday. Media literacy also challenges its students to create their own "counter advertising" messages. A general understanding of media messages is an important first step in developing a communications strategy to reduce substance abuse or prevent gun violence.

What follows is a list of national organizations, publications, community leaders with an expertise in the media literacy area, and community stories.

National Organizations

The Center for Media Literacy has an extensive website that includes teaching materials for K-12 classrooms, email bulletins, and publications. The website can be accessed at www.medialit.org/.
4727 Wilshire Blvd., #403, Los Angeles, CA 90010; Tel: 800-226-9494; Fax: 323-931-4474

Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems
The Marin Institute offers training, publications and general information about environmental strategies. Their searchable Alcohol and Policy Database and links to alcohol and tobacco websites as well as beverage industry sites can be found on their website.
24 Belvedere Street, San Rafael, CA 94901; Tel: 415-456-5692; Fax: 415-456-0491;
www.marininstitute.org/

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The *Center for Substance Abuse Prevention*
CSAP is the federal agency designed to fund and encourage creative and effective efforts aimed at reducing and eliminating alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) problems in our society. Onsite consultation, training and printed materials are available. Many of CSAP's publications are available online at www.health.org/ or by calling the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at 800-729-6686.
CSAP, Room 12-105, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857; Tel: 301-443-0365

Benton Foundation
The Benton Foundation offers information and materials to define and promote public policies. Benton seeks to shape the emerging communications environment and to demonstrate the value of communications for solving social problems by bridging the worlds of philanthropy, public policy, and community action.
1800 K Street NW, 2nd Floor, Washington DC 20006; Tel: 202-638-5770; Fax: 202-638-5771; Eml: benton@benton.org; www.benton.org

Publications and How to Order Them

The publications listed here are both free and of modest cost.

- *Public Awareness Campaigns: Part of your community wide strategy to fight substance abuse.* Join Together, 441 Stuart Street, Seventh Floor, Boston, MA 02116; Tel: 617-437-1500; Eml: info@jointogether.org; www.jointogether.org/publications

- *Media Sharp: Analyzing Tobacco and Alcohol Messages* (1999). This is a comprehensive guide for educators, youth group leaders, and health professionals who work with 11-14 year-olds. It includes a 98-page kit and videotape.
  Office on Smoking and Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4770 Buford Highway, NE, Mailstop K-50, Atlanta, GA 30341-3717; Tel: 770-488-5705; Eml: tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov; www.cdc.gov/tobacco/mediashrp.htm

- *Media Literacy: What you should know*, Reality Check Campaign. This document deals with how the media affects children and adolescents with messages about substance abuse and includes a sample media literacy questionnaire for youth.
  www.health.org/reality/CommunityKit/medlit.htm

- *Youth Media Network: An Interactive Tobacco Education Curriculum* (1998). This manual offers six focused peer advocacy activities to educate teens on the dangers of drug use.
  ToucanEd Publications, P.O. Box 1282, Soquel, CA 95073; Tel: 888-3-TOUCAN; Fax: 831-462-1129; www.toucaned.com/html/ymntobacco.html.

- *Some Things You Should Know About Media Violence and Media Literacy* contains a number of useful facts.
  The American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Boulevard, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1098; Tel: 847-228-5005; Fax: 847-228-5097;
  www.aap.org/advocacy/ChildHealthMonth/media.htm

- *Media Literacy for Prevention: Bringing Health and Media Groups Together.* Chase, Nancy. The Prevention Pipeline, September/October 1998
  www.health.org:80/pubs/prevpipe/Articles.htm

Community Leaders

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Fax: 213-931-4474

Community Stories

Stories listed below are reprinted from Join Together Online. Similar stories can be found at www.jointogether.org.

East-West Gateway Coordinating Council
The East-West Gateway Coordinating Council developed a youth program that included training on media literacy, communication skills, developing public awareness campaigns. This resulted in a series of community-wide, violence prevention forums put on by local youth.
Contact Blair Forlaw, Director of Policy and Planning at 10 Stadium Plaza, 2nd Floor, St. Louis, MO 63102; Tel: 314-421-4220.

Massachusetts' Essex County
Massachusetts' Essex County has developed a program aimed at helping at-risk youth understand the impact media has on their lives. The idea for the program came from Ruth Budelmann, director of the district attorney's juvenile justice programs. She realized that teens in Essex County's juvenile detention center were watching a great deal of television that often portrayed risky and criminal behavior in unrealistic, glamorous ways.

Two years ago, Essex County District Attorney Kevin Burke's office created Flashpoint, a media literacy program that teaches youth to analyze media messages and to make more responsible choices about violence, substance abuse, and prejudice. The program was aimed at high-risk youth ages 13 to 17 in probation, diversion and in custody of the Department of Youth Services. "The Flashpoint program gives youth critical thinking skills to make good decisions in their lives and will help to ensure safer schools and communities," said Burke, who added the main cost of the program is materials. This year, Flashpoint is being expanded to include high-risk youth throughout Massachusetts and is being used in some high schools. Next spring, the district attorney's office plans to hold a conference to train people nationwide to use the program. Contact Ruth Budelmann, Director of Juvenile Justice Programs or Amy Scanlon, Program Manager for Juvenile Justice Programs at Tel: 978-745-6610 or Fax: 978-741-4971.